Business College to Mark Golden Jubilee





Above is Cleary Business College as it appears today with an insert of its founder and present president, Prof. P. R. Cleary. Below is a picture in 1893 when a cyclone partially destroyed it.

Cleary School Was First in State to Provide Training for Business

YPSILANTI, Sept. 9—Cleary Business College, affiliated with the Michigan State Normal College, will have a four-day golden anniversary celebration the week of Oct. 28, the fall commencement at the commercial institution. The exact anniversary of the founding by Prof. P. R. Cleary, who still is the president, fell last Friday, however.

Beginning in 1883 as a school of penmanship in the Worden Block, it expanded to business courses and in 1894 became the first Michigan school offering business training. Enlarged quarters soon were necessary in the Union Block and the present building was started in 1888.

In 1889 Senator Thomas W. Palmer, of Detroit, spoke at the first formal commencement. The banquet was on the foundation of the new building, completed in 1891.

The evening of April 12, 1893, the new building was partially destroyed by the famous fifteen-minute cyclone. Only the west wing was saved and $12,000 damage was done. Students inside at a meeting were not injured. Damage in the community ran to $100,000 but few were hurt and there were no deaths.

Faculty and students rallied to the aid of President Cleary and classes were resumed the Monday following the storm in the west wing which alone was saved. The tower, east side, north wing and roof were destroyed. The lost sections soon were rebuilt.

The original three-month course was doubled and then extended to two years. Today two and four-year courses are offered. Since 1912 commercial students at the State Normal take two years at Cleary, completing work for their degree at the Normal.

In 1886 Charles L. Ellis went to California as the first commercial teacher turned out from Cleary. It was 48 years ago that Mabel Parmelee, as the first women stenographer to leave Cleary, went to a Detroit architect's office.

It was the development of automotive industry in Detroit which broke down the resistance to commercial courses in public schools, President Cleary said. In 1890 this movement of the new studies first was felt in Michigan educational institutions.

Under a recent charter the college will continue its existence under a Board of Trustees. It also is a continuous institution in another sense, that it has no vacations but runs steadily week in and week out, not even stopping for cyclones.